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(CARTER)

(BY WESLEY G. PIPPERT)

PLAINS, GA. (UPI) -- JIMMY CARTER SAID TODAY HIS STAFF MADE "A SERIOUS MISTAKE" IN REVEALING A MEMO THAT LISTED CIA DIRECTOR GEORGE BUSH AMONG THOSE WHO CARTER HAS CLAIMED WERE PUT ON THE FEDERAL PAYROLL FOR POLITICAL EXPEDIENCY.

THE DEMOCRATIC PRESIDENTIAL NOMINEE SAID THAT, TO THE CONTRARY, HE BELIEVED BUSH HAS DONE "A GOOD JOB" IN CORRECTING DEFECTS IN THE CIA.

"I WOULD NOT INCLUDE GEORGE BUSH AMONG THOSE WHO ARE APPOINTED WITHOUT QUALIFICATIONS. IT WAS ALSO A MISTAKE TO ALLEGE GEORGE BUSH WAS APOINTED JUST BECAUSE OF POLITICAL REASONS," CARTER SAID.

HE MADE THE COMMENTS DURING A NEWS CONFERENCE HELD BY HIM AND CALIFORNIA GOV. EDMUND BROWN IN THE OLD TRAIN STATION WHICH SERVES AS CARTER'S LOCAL CAMPAIGN HEADQUARTERS. BROWN IS VISITING CARTER IN PLAINS.

CARTER WAS ASKED ABOUT A STAFF MEMO GIVEN TO A REPORTER TO SUPPORT CARTER'S CHARGES IN A SPEECH TO THE AMERICAN BAR ASSOCIATION THAT THE FORD & NIXON ADMINISTRATIONS HAD PLAYED POLITICS WITH FEDERAL JOBS. THE MEMO ACCUSED THE GOP OF USING THE FEDERAL PAYROLL AS A "DUMPING GROUNDS" FOR DEFEATED CANDIDATES AND POLITICAL PARTISANS.

THE NAME OF BUSH, TWICE DEFEATED IN BIDS FOR A SENATE SEAT, WAS INCLUDED ON THE LIST. AT THE VERY MOMENT THE LIST WAS BEING DISTRIBUTED, BUSH WAS BRIEFING CARTER ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS.

"THAT WAS A SERIOUS MISTAKE ON SOME STAFF MEMBER'S PART TO REVEAL AN INTRA-STAFF MEMO," SAID CARTER.

"I'VE NEVER SEEN IT MYSELF. I NEVER DISCUSSED WITH ANYONE AT ANY TIME THE QUALIFICATIONS OF GEORGE BUSH. I HAPPEN TO THINK A LOT OF GEORGE BUSH."

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